

# Gospel of Mark: - Meal with a Message

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[ 0 : 00 ] Highlight of the year. After all it was, look at verse 12 of chapter 14, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or better known as the Passover. It was a week-long celebration of eating and drinking to commemorate the rescue of God's people from Egypt almost 1,500 years before. And every year without fail from that first time, that rescue was remembered with a special meal. And for the disciples and for Jesus, it was no different. Look at the rest of verse 12. During the Feast, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover? You see, central to this amazing meal was what was called the Passover lamb. It was the tradition for each family or each gathering to go and get a lamb, sacrifice that lamb, and then eat part of it later on that evening in a celebratory meal. Now that might be strange to us, but thankfully the meaning of this meal is explained for us in the book of Exodus. So put your finger there in Mark, or hold your place there in Mark, and go to the book of Exodus, which is at the beginning of the Bible. Again, I'm sorry, I haven't got a page number, so Exodus chapter 12 is what we're looking for. It's right at the beginning, Genesis, and then Exodus. Has somebody got a page? It's page 68.

So just to give a bit of context, Exodus. It simply means exit or departure, and it's all about God's people being rescued, having been enslaved for 400 years under the tyranny of Pharaoh, and God had promised to free his people to rescue them, and this is how it happened. It all revolved around a meal.

So Exodus chapter 12 verse 3. So follow along, we're going to, well, up on the screen you'll see the verses that we're going to be looking at. So I'll read them. Exodus 12 verse 3. He says, Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. Verse 6. Take care of the lambs until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

Then they are to take some of the blood from that lamb and put it on the sides and on the tops of the door frames of the houses where they eat the lambs. Now what would they do that for? That sounds a bit gruesome and a bit strange. Well, we're told in verse 12. Because on that same night, God says, I will pass through Egypt and will strike down every firstborn, both men and animals.

[ 3 : 52 ] And I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood, well, that will be a sign for you on the house where you are. And when I see the blood on the door frames, I will pass over you.

And no destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. So, verse 17. The command was given to celebrate this feast of unleavened bread or Passover because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions, your people, out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. Now look at verse 26.

So this is what they were to celebrate. And when your children ask you, so when they were all sitting down having this meal and a child asks, what does this meal mean? Why are we celebrating it?

Verse 27. Then tell them it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians. Then the people bowed down and worshipped.

Go back to Mark's Gospel, chapter 14. So you see, every year, for the last 1500 years, this Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated. But this time, everything would change. They would never eat this meal in the same way ever again. You see, this meal is not about the death and blood of a lamb. This meal is about the blood and death of Jesus. The death of the lamb that we read about in Exodus was simply there to prepare us for the coming death of Jesus Christ. So as Jesus shares in this meal with his disciples, he tells us four things about his death. He uses

this meal to teach us four things about his death.

[ 6 : 30 ] First of all, the plan of Jesus' death, the reason for Jesus' death, the meaning of his death, and the purpose. So the plan, the reason, the meaning, and the purpose.

So first of all, the plan. This meal that Jesus celebrated with his disciples was all planned and prepared for in advance.

So look at the end of verse 12. They say, where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover? So Jesus sent two of his disciples, telling them, go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.

Follow him. And say to the owner of the house that he enters, the teacher asks, where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?

And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and all ready. Make preparations for us there.

[ 7 : 45 ] You see, clearly Jesus has everything worked out. This is no chance meal. This has all been planned and prepared for in advance. The man who they're going to meet, carrying the water jar, they're going to kind of just meet him.

Coincidentally, not. All part of God's plan. The conversation with the owner who already has the room prepared. So before they even sit down to eat with Jesus, Jesus wants us to know that he is in complete control of everything that is going to happen to him in the next 24 hours.

Verse 16. The disciples left and they went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. You see, this meal that was so carefully planned is reminding us and telling us that the death of Jesus is so carefully planned.

His death comes at the same time as the Passover meal. It's intentional. It's deliberate. It's all part of God's amazing design because through this meal celebrated every year, he wants us to see that he is the Passover lamb.

[ 9 : 17 ] That God has planned and prepared this event, Jesus' death for us from before time began for you and for me. This is no mistake.

This is part of God's amazing design for us. Second, the reason for Jesus' death. this meal was meant to be a time of great celebration.

Lots of eating, lots of drinking, friends and family all gathering together. I guess the nearest for us would be like Christmas Day. Full of laughter, lots of fun, all the stories going on around the table. And then Jesus spoke up and look what he said. Verse 18. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.

One who is eating with me. You can imagine the atmosphere. It changes just like that.

[ 10 : 32 ] The eating stops. The laughter dies away. And as the reality of what Jesus has just said begins to sink in, they all begin to shuffle uncomfortably, not wanting to make eye contact.

Verse 19. They were saddened. And one by one they said to Jesus, surely not I, not me.

And we can see them all there around the table, Matthew, no, wouldn't be me. Peter, not I. Thomas, no.

Judas, never. John, no. One by one, not me, not me. But Jesus is insistent.

Verse 20. It is one of the twelve. One of them who dips bread into the bowl with me.

[ 11 : 40 ] We can hear their thoughts. One of us going to betray Jesus? It couldn't be possible. He must be mistaken. We would never fail him.

You see, as we've seen as we've gone through Mark's gospel, the disciples have refused to accept that Jesus must die.

They couldn't see a reason for him dying. Why would he have to? But tonight, at this meal, Jesus makes the reason crystal clear.

You see, we have a rather high view of ourselves. We like to think of ourselves as actually being more good than bad.

In fact, we would back ourselves every time when it comes to issues of loyalty and faithfulness. I would never fail. But Jesus sees us as we really are.

[ 12 : 42 ] He sees our hearts. He knows our true nature. He knows that we came into this world born to fail. That's the effect that sin has on our lives.

We are born enslaved, captured to sin. We can't help but fail. And we fail our wives. And we fail our husbands.

And as parents, we fail our children. And we fail our friends. and we fail each other. The reality is we're all moral failures.

And just as Jesus predicted the failure of Judas, in fact, all the disciples would deny him and desert him and run away from him. So he predicts the failure of each one of us.

It's not if we mess up, but when we mess up. And it's as if Jesus is saying to us, as we share in this meal with him, let me show you the real you.

[ 13 : 53 ] Stop all this pretending. no more hiding behind masks. I tell you the truth. You will betray me. And failure is serious.

Verse 21. The Son of Man will go, this is Jesus, will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man.

it would be better for him if he had not been born. You see, the problem with our failure, of our rejection and our turning away from God, is it leads to judgment.

It's wrecked our lives and it's wrecked the world in which we live. And yes, we can read this and think, well, Jesus knew who was going to betray him, but that doesn't excuse our personal responsibility.

responsibility. We can't be blaming others all the time and pointing fingers and saying, well, it was my background or it was this or it was that or it was that person. We must take ownership of our own personal failure.

[ 15 : 09 ] And that's the reason why Jesus must die. Jesus must die so that he can deal with my failure and for your failure.

Third, the meaning of Jesus' death. This meal, which was a great meal, had lots of roast lamb and herbs, bread and wine, bread and all of the elements and all of that part of the meal was designed to remember that special night from 1500 years ago when God had passed over the land of Egypt. But at the central part of this meal, when somebody should get up and start rehearsing or talking about the events of the past, Jesus stands up and he begins to tell the story, but rather than start talking about a lamb and something that happened in the past, Jesus begins to talk about himself and the present.

Look at verse 22. While they were all eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, take it, this is my body.

then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them and they all drank from it. This is my blood.

[ 16 : 52 ] You see, Jesus is wanting us to make the connections that, look, that lamb, that story that we know so well in Exodus, that lamb that was slaughtered to protect the people and to free the people.

Can't you see that I'm that lamb who has come to protect you and to free you from the judgment that your failure deserves? Think back again to the story in Exodus.

Remember what we read, a lamb? Each family selected a lamb and then on a particular night that lamb was slaughtered and the very act of killing that lamb was symbolic and significant because the people knew that on that same night God was going to come and he was going to pass over Egypt in judgment.

So when that lamb was killed they knew that this was a death in place of their death. God's judgment was going to come and the firstborn would die.

So God was teaching them that look, somebody must die for you. Someone must die in place of you. And then when they took the blood of that lamb and they began to paint it on the door frames of the door, this is what God had said, the blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are and when I see the blood I will pass over you and no destructive plague will touch you.

[ 18 : 44 ] Now look at what Jesus does and listen to what he says at this meal. Look at what he does and listen to what he says.

He takes bread, doesn't he, in verse 22, and he breaks that bread and he holds it before his disciples and he says, this is my body.

Just as that lamb was broken and ripped apart, torn apart, slaughtered, so I will be broken and slaughtered and torn apart for you.

And then as Jesus at the meal, he took the cup, a cup of wine and he would have poured the wine and he passed the cup around and as he held the cup, what did he say?

He says, this is my blood which has been poured out for you. Just as the lamb's blood was put on the door frames in faith that when God came over, they would be protected from judgment, so he is saying, faith in my blood, faith in my death is going to protect you from God's eternal judgment.

[ 20 : 18 ] the disciples sit thinking about their failure that's to come and looking at the bread and looking at the wine and thinking about the lamb that was slaughtered and looking at Jesus who is going to die for them because Jesus knows as he eats this meal his death is only hours away and at this meal this last meal that he shares with them he wants them to see that he is the lamb slaughtered sacrificed for us that his death was a death in place of my death and your death and when Jesus died on the cross when he hung there pierced as we sang earlier for our transgressions the judgment of

God it didn't pass over the judgment of God fell on Jesus the sacrificed lamb Jesus on the cross took the wrath of God for you and for me as Jesus hung on the cross he was treated as a failure for us of all the things that we have gotten wrong of all of my failures everything Jesus took them all he was the innocent one the perfect one but he takes everything all my failure all my mess ups and the promise for us is that if we apply that blood the death of Jesus to our lives not literally nobody's asking that we paint ourselves or anything like that it's not that it's faith in what

Jesus has done and if we do God's judgment will pass over us and we will be protected we will be protected from hell itself and eternal separation from him that's why Jesus must die he has to and the good news is he has he became the sacrifice for you and for me and then fourth the purpose of Jesus death this meal was simply a great occasion after all it was a meal to celebrate their rescue to remember their freedom from slavery from from Egypt now look what happens after the disciples share this meal with

Jesus look at what they do verse 26 when they had sung a hymn so they have eaten the meal and when they had sung a hymn a hymn of praise they went out to the mount of olives do you see the significance there they went out that little phrase they went out the word that is being used there is the same word exodus it means departure it means exit and Mark the author is wanting us to get the connections here that after the first Passover meal back in Egypt when they were celebrating together it was the departure it was the exit to go into a new life a brand new kind of life to go into the promised land they were leaving going somewhere new they departed from the rule of Pharaoh they are now going to live with God in slavery behind and that's what Jesus' death has done for us and that's what he wants us to get his death provides the exit his death is the departure door to free us from our slavery to sin so that we might enter into a new kind of life to live with him forever you see this meal that we're looking at here it isn't a meal belonging to another culture of another time in a different place this is our meal this is our exodus story and through our trust in Jesus and his death for us we have been set free we've been liberated no longer bound by our failures no longer bogged down and swamped by our guilt and shame instead we've been set free living in the reality of

[ 25 : 42 ] God's forgiveness renewed and restored people children of God belonging to him never to be condemned we've been set free that's why Jesus died to free us and to give us life they went out after they celebrated the meal and so it becomes a meal for us this is a meal where we remember Jesus the true and ultimate Passover lamb the one who sacrificed his life for us this is a meal the invitation goes out to all people that they would all share in this meal but only for those who recognise they are failures and need forgiveness only for those who put their trust in

Jesus the invitation is out there for all but he says only share in this meal if your trust is in me if you know that I died for you and let's remember as we come together now to share in this meal this is a celebration this is a joyful occasion it's to be a good time a happy time because through Jesus we've been set free from judgement set free to live a new kind of life this is our meal a meal to celebrate and remember so before we do drink and before we do eat of this meal we're going to sing a song a hymn of reflection a hymn of praise behold the lamb who bears our sins away slain for us and we remember the promise made that all who come in faith find forgiveness at the cross we share in this bread of life we drink of his sacrifice as a sign of our bonds of peace around the table of the king this isn't made up this is the meal of Jesus to remember so let's stand together we'll sing and we'll reflect on the meal that we are going to enjoy eating together